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ABSTRACT

The consequences of poverty are enormous, and they begin with the birth of children to unprepared mothers. High risk leads to more high risk, and the cycle of poverty continues. Trying to change the attitudes or behaviors of adolescents is difficult. Successful interventions must begin before the birth of the child, concentrating on teenage girls and early development, from conception to age three. Poor public education, the roots of violence and crime, and high socioeconomic costs flow from the failure to acknowledge the importance of early childhood development. Widespread intervention is not enough. Although interventions may have some success at any point in the cycle of poverty, the place to intervene to break the cycle is at conception. These issues are developed in the following chapters: (1) "Raised in Jeopardy"; (2) "Successful Intervention and Its Limits"; (3) "Primary Prevention and the Right To Life"; (4) "The Cost of Failure"; (5) "The Abortion Question"; (6) "The Cycle of Poverty and Violence: A Reassessment"; (7) "Trends in Education, Poverty, Violence, and Punishment"; and (8) "Breaking the Cycle: A New War on Poverty." Two appendixes list agencies working for families and children and describe the Ounce of Prevention Center for Successful Child Development Health Services, a model program. (Contains 10 figures, 7 tables, and 62 references.) (SLD)

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